



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

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ALBUQUERQUE FIRM IS 8(A) GRADUATE OF THE YEAR

Kansas City firm named National Minority Small Business of the Year; Administrator Barreto Also Announces Winner of Special Leadership Award

WASHINGTON – Three exceptional minority-owned businesses were named recipients of the U.S. Small Business Administration's most celebrated awards for superior achievement during the 20th National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week celebration in Washington, D.C., today.

The winner of the *National 8(a) Minority Small Business Graduate of the Year Award* is Sparkle Maintenance, Inc. of Albuquerque, N.M. Environmental Management Resources, Inc., of Kansas City, Mo., is the recipient of the *National Minority Small Business Firm of the Year Award*. Raul R. Romero, President and CEO of S&B Infrastructure, Ltd., is the winner of the *Administrator's Leadership Award*. The *Administrator's Leadership Award* recognizes the recipient for his tireless efforts and unwavering commitment on behalf of the nation's minority small business community.

"Since 1983, the President has proclaimed a National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week observance to recognize the outstanding achievements of minority businesses and to honor the corporations and financial institutions that support minority business development," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto

"We're here today to celebrate the successes of these firms that contribute significantly to the success of our economy. I congratulate them for a job well done," continued Administrator Barreto.

Two of the three top award recipients were participants in the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program – a program that provides management and technical assistance, networking and federal contracting opportunities to socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

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National 8(a) Minority Small Business Graduate of the Year

Carlo Lucero, President

Sparkle Maintenance, Inc.

It was actually Ben Lucero, father of Carlo Lucero, President of Sparkle Maintenance, Inc., who envisioned establishing the commercial janitorial and building maintenance service in New Mexico in 1964. Ben Lucero's vision gave rise to a business that now boasts a wide range of facility experience which includes office buildings, medical and high tech facilities, auto dealerships, government buildings, retail establishments, institutions and schools. The current service area includes cities throughout New Mexico, Colorado and Texas. Today, Sparkle is owned and operated by Ben's sons Carlo and Paul as they continue to build upon their father's legacy.

National Minority Small Business Firm of the Year

Connie S. Cook, President

Environmental Management Resources, Inc. (EMR)

Ms. Connie S. Cook founded Environmental Management Resources, Inc. in 1988. The Native American woman-owned firm is among the nation's leading providers of environmental consulting, testing, remediation services and training. Although EMR's headquarters is located in Kansas, EMR has 11 primary service locations throughout the United States from which approximately 100 professionals provide comprehensive environmental consulting, testing and engineering services.

In 2000, EMR completed more than 700 environmental and construction projects at sites located in 34 states, generating gross revenues in excess of \$10 million. Of those projects, 75 percent were performed for Fortune 500 firms, 15 percent for smaller businesses and 10 percent for government agencies. EMR has been an active participant in the SBA's 8(a) Business Development program for the past two years.

Administrator's Leadership Award Recipient

Raul R. Romero, President and CEO

S & B Engineers and Constructors, Ltd.

S & B Engineers and Constructors, Ltd. is the largest independently owned engineering and construction firm in Houston with revenues approaching \$500 million annually and almost 4,000 employees nationally and internationally.

Raul R. Romero, President and CEO of S & B, was appointed Commissioner of the Texas General Services by Governor George W. Bush in 1995. As commissioner of General Services, Mr. Romero helped craft the Texas state Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Plan, or Affirmative Access Plan, increasing state contracts going to women-owned businesses

by 47 percent, African-American owned businesses by 78 percent and Hispanic owned businesses by 58 percent.

The firm is engaged in public works and government services, presently engineering over one and a half billion dollars in infrastructure projects. Mr. Romero was cited in *Hispanic Business Magazine* in the top 100 national influential Hispanic businesses in the United States in 1995 and 1999. He was also recognized by the *Houston Post Viva Magazine* as one of Houston's prominent Hispanic business leaders.

Background information on the winners of the National Minority Small Business Firms of the Year and the National 8(a) Minority Small Business Graduates of the Year:

The 11 Regional Minority Small Business Persons of the Year are:

REGION I

Mr. Theodore C. Hsu
President
Horizon Services Corporation
Hartford, CT

REGION VI

Ms. Betty P. Chao
President
WESTECH International, Inc.
Albuquerque, NM

REGION II

Mr. Jose M. Garcia
President
Action Service Corporation
San Juan, PR

***REGION VII (TIE)**

Mr. Michael Zambrana	Ms. Connie S. Cook
President	President
Pangea Group, Inc.	Environmental Mgmt.
St. Louis, MO	Resources, Inc.
	Kansas City, MO

REGION III

Ms. Dona A.P. Storey
President
Quality Technical Services, Inc.
Virginia Beach, VA

REGION VIII

Mr. Wendel P. Torres
President
Alliance General Contractors, LLC
Colorado Springs, CO

REGION IV

Mr. Jose J. Sosa
President
J.J. Sosa & Associates, Inc.
Tampa, FL

REGION IX

Mr. Keith Odister
President
K.O.O. Construction, Inc.
W. Sacramento, CA

REGION V

Mr. David C. Woods
President
Bertram Electric Company
Indianapolis, IN

REGION X

Mr. Rocky M. Wens
President
Engineering Support Personnel, Inc.
Lynnwood, WA

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The awards were part of the MED Week Conference at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., that began Sept. 24 and will end on Sept. 27. The SBA's Office of Government Contracting and Business Development is cosponsoring the event with the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency. The conference features workshops, seminars, award ceremonies, a business expo and a *Meet Your White House* breakfast session with senior staff from the Bush Administration including the Honorable Andrew Card, the President's Chief of Staff.

For more information, contact the MED Week 2002 office at 1-877-MEDWEEK or visit the Web site at www.medweek.gov.

*Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov> or by calling the **SBA's Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA.***

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